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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Cancelled).

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2. (Currently Amended) A method of inhibiting melanin synthesis in the skin of a patient comprising administering directly to said skin of said patient an amount of ZAG sufficient to effect said inhibition.

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 2 wherein a nucleic acid sequence encoding ZAG is administered under conditions such that said sequence is expressed and ZAG is thereby produced.

5. (Cancelled).

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6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 2 wherein said patient suffers from increased or aberrant skin pigmentation hyperpigmentation.

7. (Cancelled).

8. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 2 wherein ZAG is administered systemically.

9. (Withdrawn) A composition comprising ZAG wherein said composition is in the form of a cream, gel or lotion.

10. (Withdrawn) A sterile composition comprising ZAG and a carrier.

11. (Withdrawn) A composition comprising ZAG in dosage unit form.

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12. (New) The method according to claim 6 wherein said hyperpigmentation results from sun-exposure, inflammation or scarring.

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13. (New) The method according to claim 6 wherein said patient suffers from a disorder associated with congenital or acquired proliferation of melanocytes.